

# COUNTY OF YORK

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 5, 2005 (BOS Mtg. 4/19/05)

**TO:** York County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Crossroads Community Youth Home

### **Background**

During the 1970's, concern for youthful offenders and a desire to support the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of the Ninth Judicial District caused local jurisdictions to collectively fund a variety of juvenile justice programs. The regional "Colonial Group Home Commission" includes York, Gloucester and James City Counties, and the City of Williamsburg. The Commonwealth provides some funding and establishes various program standards through the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). York County is the managing jurisdiction and programs are staffed and administered by the York County Department of Community Services. An attachment describing the program and services is enclosed.

The Commission is composed of one governmental and one citizen representative from each member locality. In order to assure appropriate fiscal controls on behalf of member localities, the Commission has the following reserved authorities:

- ◆ Approval of the annual budget
- ◆ Approval of the annual schedule of fees and charges
- ◆ Approval of new programs, termination of old programs and substantial modification of existing programs.

This balance has served all member localities extremely well.

Crossroads Community Youth Home is one of the core services. It is a 12 bed residential care facility for delinquent teenage boys ages 14-18. It is collectively funded and operated for the benefit of Commission member localities. Although the Commission assures good policy and fiscal oversight, the real property is actually owned by the four member localities as tenants-in-common. This facility has served an excellent programmatic purpose. Structurally, however, it was originally a private residence and was never intended to be a group home. It is poorly designed for such purposes. Having three floors and various obscured areas it is extremely difficult to operate. Further, the facility is aged and has been deteriorating drastically, requiring continuous and expensive repairs.

The localities have worked for several years to replace this facility with an appropriately designed and sized structure. This effort has accomplished the following:

- ◆ Site – identified a site located in York County but owned by the City of Williamsburg, which has indicated a willingness to enter into a long-term land lease agreement.
- ◆ Secured favorable zoning opinions from the County of York.
- ◆ Obtained plans for a suitable building that is currently in use for a similar purpose. Although still serving youth ages 14-18, the new structure would be an 18 bed, coed facility.
- ◆ Secured an architectural and engineering firm to adapt the design. Obtained approval of a Needs Assessment by the Board of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).
- ◆ Engaged in significant financial planning for the local share of the state-local costs of construction.
- ◆ Identified two earnest potential purchasers of the existing facility.

The 2002 General Assembly placed a moratorium on the funding and the approvals process for residential facilities for juveniles. Since the Commonwealth's portion of construction costs is an economic necessity this stalled further progress on this project until late 2004. At that time it became apparent that the cost of repairs and the hazards of operating in such a poorly designed facility could not continue.

### **Current**

Efforts to persuade the 2005 General Assembly to except the Crossroads replacement project by name from the state moratorium were successful. It is now necessary for the owner localities to formally authorize the Commission and Commission Administrator to take the appropriate steps necessary to prepare for a sale of the existing facility and begin the next phase of construction planning for the new facility. The present actions include the following:

1. Submission of the Planning Study documents is the next action required in the Commonwealth's approval process. That document has been prepared and is under review by staff of the DJJ. Any recommended adjustments will be made during the Spring with the expectation that the DJJ Board will formally act to approve the Planning Study at their June, 2005 meeting.
2. Subsequent to action by their Board, DJJ will include the Commonwealth's funding in the budget for the next state biennium. That proceeds through the Secretary of Public Safety and is included in the Governor's budget submissions to the 2006 General Assembly. The Commonwealth's share is reimbursed to localities following the completion of construction.
3. The Colonial Group Home Commission, acting on behalf of the member localities owning the facility, will negotiate a commitment to sell the existing facility in order to assure the appropriate revenues from such a sale. Proceeds

- from the sale will be applied toward the costs of the new facility. The sale will not close until such time as the program fully relocates to a newly completed structure.
4. The Colonial Group Home Commission, again acting on behalf of the member localities, will negotiate a long-term land lease with the City of Williamsburg.
  5. Plans for interim financing for construction, until the state's share of the costs is received, must proceed and will likely involve the use of a member locality's bond financing mechanisms.

Although there will be additional formal actions required by the member localities, it is necessary to adopt the enclosed resolution in order for the replacement project to move forward at this time. The resolution authorizes the Commission and the Commission Administrator to proceed with details of a commitment to sell the existing facility, the interim financing and the provisions of a land lease.